

March 18, 2020

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to approve Governor Murphy's request for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Military to aid our New Jersey's ongoing effort to increase hospital and intensive care unit capacity. We must act quickly and decisively to prevent our hospitals and healthcare facilities from being completely overwhelmed in the coming weeks and months.

Across 71 hospitals in New Jersey, there are only approximately 23,000 hospital beds, with 55% of those beds occupied. Of those 23,000 beds, just 2,000 are critical care unit beds. New Jersey Department of Health estimates that in two weeks, our state may need an additional 2,000 critical care beds, with 10% of those beds needing ventilators. The Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs at Rutgers University-Camden found that New Jersey may have a hospital bed shortfall of 123,000 to 313,000 in the coming months. Assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Military to expand our healthcare capacity through converting existing space and constructing new, emergency field hospitals in order to mitigate the hospital shortfalls our state will inevitably face is urgently needed now.

The State of New Jersey is already working around the clock to revitalize and expand hospital infrastructure, but it will need support from the federal government to be sufficiently prepared for the anticipated influx of severe COVID-19 cases. New Jersey has already mobilized its national guard to investigate how to increase hospital infrastructure. Furthermore, our state's Health Commissioner has been working with hospitals in reopening closed hospital wings, and is reviewing if it is possible to restore a closed hospital. Support at the federal level will help our state to meet its needs and allow those who contract the coronavirus to receive lifesaving healthcare.

In difficult times such as now, we should be using all available resources of the federal government to slow and stop the spread of COVID-19. Assistance from the U.S. Military and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in expanding hospital and intensive care unit capacity will allow our state to meet the challenges we face. We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

ROBERT MENENDEZ  
United States Senator

CORY A BOOKER  
United States Senator

BILL PASCRELL JR.  
Member of Congress

FRANK PALLONE JR.  
Member of Congress

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress

BONNIE WATSON-COLEMAN  
Member of Congress

ANDY KIM  
Member of Congress

TOM MALINOWSKI  
Member of Congress

ALBIO SIRES  
Member of Congress

DONALD NORCROSS  
Member of Congress

MIKIE SHERRILL  
Member of Congress

DONALD PAYNE JR.  
Member of Congress

JOSH GOTTHEIMER  
Member of Congress

JEFF VAN DREW  
Member of Congress